Government does not wish to comment on the sovereign right of the legislature of another country to determine the laws of that country. However, Government is working with all concerned to emphasise the mutual interest of India and the United States in unrestricted growth of India-U.S. ties in the information technology industry.

Expansion and upgradation of I.T.

*47. SHRI HARISH RAWAT: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the steps to be taken for the expansion and up-gradation of the Information Technology in all the States of the country equally;

(b) whether Government propose to provide special assistance to bring forward the under developed States in the said field; and

(c) if so, the details of proposals accepted for the year 2003-04 and 2004-05 alongwith the locations thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI ARUN SHOURIE): (a) The measures taken by the Government for expansion and upgradation of Information Technology (IT) across the country include:

- provision of IT and datacom infrastruture through National Informatics Centre (NIC), Education and Research Network of India (ERNET) and Software Technology Parks of India (STPI);
- fiscal incentives in the form of tax rebates and duty concessions for investments in software and hardware manufacture and exports;
- nurturing centres of excellence in science and technology and supporting higher education and R & D efforts in related fields; and
- supplementing IT manpower with non-formal IT education through accreditation of courses, curriculum design and conduct of examinations for different levels of proficiency.

The Department of Information Technology (DIT) has also established

a network of institutions to undertake critical developmental activities in key/emerging areas of Information Technology. These are as under:-

- The Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (CDAC) is engaged in R&D in areas of high-performance computing for strategic and scientific applications with associated grid computing, language technologies, software technologies, Info Security and embedded solutions, and take them to beneficiaries;
- The Standardisation, Testing & Quality Certification (STQC) Directorate functions as a kay enabler for the Indian IT industries & Organisations to achieve International standards of product & services, establish a national assurance framework for cyber security and provide quality assurance support for Indian language technology products;
- The mission of the Centre for Materials for Electronics Technologies (C-METs) is to develop a knowledge base in electronics materials and their processing technology for the Indian industry and provide critical electronics materials, know-how and technical services;
- The Society for Applied Microwave Electronics Engineering and Research (SAMEER) carries out R&D in the area of Microwave Electronics Engineering, including linear accelerator technology, opto-electronics, microwave engineering, millimeter wave technology sub-systems and components and also offers test and consultancy services in the area of Electronmagnetic Interference/ Electromagnetic Compatibility (EMI/EMC); and
- The Media Lab Asia aims to conduct research in information and communication technologies relevant for the underserved, ensure successful pilot implementation in the villages, take care of digital divide related issues and establish India as leading innovator of research relevant to emerging markets. The R&D hubs of Media Lab Asia are located in the Indian Institutes of Technology, which have been involved in conducting projectised ICT research and developing innovative solutions.

The DIT has put in place an institutional infrastructure for promoting electronic transactions in a secure environment and responding to incidents likely to compromise network security.

DIT has also been providing support to Industry Associations and Societies such as National Association of Software and Services Companies (NASSCOM), Manufacturer's Associations for Information Technology (MAIT) for the purposes of export promotion, investment promotion and IT awareness through seminars, studies, national and international exhibitions, buyer-seller meets, road shows and brand building activities to project the capability of the Indian Info Tech industry.

The ongoing process of liberalization of the economy, including deregulation of the Telecom sector, has accelerated the expansion and upgradation of IT throughout the country.

(b) and (c) Within the constraints of budgetary resources, Department of InformationTechnology (DIT) has been providing assistance to less developed States for expansion and upgradation of IT. During the current year, approval has been accorded to the following proposals:—

1. Setting up Community Information Centre (CICs) in all the community development blocks of Jammu and Kashmir;

2. Replication of e-Governance project on a pilot scale in the following domains:

(i) Land Records—in the States of Chhatisgarh, Orissa, Rajasthan, Jharkhand and Assam.

(ii) Property Registration—in the State of Himachal Pradesh;

(iii) Road Transport—in the States of Tripura, Himachal Pradesh and Uttaranchal.

3. Establishment of High Speed Data Communication facilities in Manipur under STPI Scheme.

4. Installation of Telemedicine Systems linking designated district hospital in each States of Mizoram and Sikkim with super-speciality hospitals.

It has also been decided to formulate and implement an Action Plan on e-Governance comprising core mission projects in key areas of Government—Citizen and Government—Business interface in the Central and State Governments, strengthening of core IT infrastructure and development of the required human resources.